

Executive summary

ANALYSIS BY ATTORNEY GENERAL CHRIS KOSTER

Eleven years ago Missouri released its first report on vehicle stop data. This report represents the eleventh annual analysis of vehicle stop data in Missouri, a review that includes information about 1,688,720 stops by law enforcement in the state during 2010. The report can be compared to data going back to 2000 on the Attorney General's Web site at ago.mo.gov.

The analysis in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 used census estimates to reflect the changes in Missouri's population since the 2000 census. That census was the benchmark for the previous five reports. The 2010 statewide analysis used census estimates from the 2010 census.

As our state's population changes in number and demographics, these census estimates can help provide a more accurate benchmark to analyze the data. (Appendix C of this report provides key indicators by each agency using the 2010 census information.)

The overall number of stops reported decreased in 2010. As it has in the past, the disparity index for African-American drivers continues to be of significant concern. The disparity index for African-American drivers decreased slightly from 1.62 in 2009 to 1.61 in 2010. At the same time, the disparity index for Hispanic drivers decreased from .81 in 2009 to .78 in 2010, however, both groups continue to have search rates significantly higher than that of white drivers.

These findings continue a disturbing trend for African-American drivers in Missouri. Specifically, the disparity indexes for African-American drivers increased from 2005 – 2009 exhibiting disparity indexes of 1.42 in 2005, 1.49 in 2006, 1.58 in 2007 and 1.59 in 2008 and 1.62 in 2009, then a slight decrease in 2010 to 1.61. In fact, the disparity rate for African-American drivers has gone down only one other time in the history of the report again only slightly, to 1.34 in 2004 from 1.36 in 2003. Stated another way, the disparity index for African-American drivers increased in nine out of the last eleven years. The 2010 disparity rate of 1.61 compares to a rate of 1.27 eleven years ago. African-American drivers were 69% more likely than white drivers to be stopped based on their proportion of driving-age population in 2010, compared to 30 percent more likely than white drivers in 2000.

With 630 law enforcement agencies conducting vehicle stops in Missouri, there is no single explanation why these disparities exist. This report provides statistical information so the data from each agency can

be examined, and appropriate questions asked of those agencies.

In 2004, state law was changed to require law enforcement to include investigative vehicle stops in their reports, in addition to the stops for traffic violations.

One of the best uses of these reports is as a springboard for dialogue and communication between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. It is vital that Missouri law enforcement agencies continue to review the rates of stops and searches and to continue their outreach efforts.

Statistical disproportion does not prove that law enforcement officers are making vehicle stops based on the perceived race or ethnicity of the driver. The compilation and analysis of data, however, does provide both law enforcement and the community with a starting point for dialogue to appreciate each other's perspective and arrive at common ground.

I am proud that Missouri took a leading role, under the stewardship of then-Attorney General Nixon, Governor Carnahan and many in the legislature, in passing legislation requiring the collection and examination of vehicle stop data on this scale. I pledge to continue that tradition in carrying on the detailed and critical examination necessary to ensure fairness to Missouri's law enforcement application. It is my hope that this report may serve as a springboard to open dialogue and legislative review.


We continue to show that commitment through laws that require each law enforcement agency to not only have a written policy regarding racial profiling, but also to provide additional training to officers and to promote the use of effective, non-combative methods for carrying out their duties in a racially and culturally diverse environment.

Missouri's law enforcement members continue to do commendable work in the face of many challenges. I appreciate their efforts and willingness to compile the information for these annual reports.

The number of agencies that did not comply with the vehicle stops reporting law in 2010 increased to 24. This represents an increase from 2009 when 13 departments failed to report. Failure to report is unacceptable and should be considered so by the General Assembly. A list of these agencies has been turned over to the Governor for imposition of the statutory sanctions.

Along with the data, several individual law enforcement agencies provided other information about factors that may impact their numbers. The reader should consider these factors when examining the data. Law-abiding drivers have the right to travel throughout Missouri without the fear that they will be stopped

based solely on their race or ethnicity. I am confident that Missourians of all races and ethnic groups and law enforcement officers from throughout the state agree with me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris K. L. W." with a long horizontal stroke at the end.